

IN THE VANGUARD



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TORONTO

IN THE VANGUARD

BY
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ACT I

SCENE I

IN THE VANGUARD

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SCENE I

MAY DAY

The Village Green

Many large trees stand upon the Common. Flowering shrubs grow in profusion upon the turf. To the East, picturesque houses are seen through the trees; to the West, the distant hills. Here, the Common is more open; there are no trees. In the open space, several girls are gaily dancing; their light draperies are blown by the wind. Dancing, they wind in and out of a long garland woven of flowers, and as they dance, they sing.

THE GIRLS

Singing.

Merrily dawns the month of May!
Primroses pink and white,
The golden sun is glad to-day:
The stars will laugh to-night.
Weave, weave the garland gay,
To greet the month of May!

O happy are the song-birds now,
May's plumage on their breasts!
Secure within the blossoming bough
They build their hidden nests.
Weave, weave the garland gay,
To greet the month of May!

FIRST GIRL

Eagerly, stopping the dance.

There comes Elsa!

SECOND GIRL

Disdainfully.

Bah! I hate her proud ways.

FIRST GIRL

Indignantly.

Proud? — Elsa? — How absurd! Elsa is adorable!

SECOND GIRL

Not proud? Look at the way she carries her head!
She looks as though she thought we were the dust
under her feet.

FIRST GIRL

She can't help the way her head is set on her
shoulders! She walks like that in her bath-room.
The Girls laugh.

She does! I was there the other day — She was washing her hands — and she looked like one of the statues in the new Museum that Mr. Greart gave to the town; that one where the goddess is standing before the altar; Elsa looked as though she were performing a religious rite.

THIRD GIRL

What a goose you are, Molly! Elsa is awfully nice, but she isn't much like a goddess; she wears too good clothes.

SECOND GIRL

She is too top-lofty for me; I don't like her!

MINNIE

Sarcastically.

Poor Elsa! How can she possibly bear it!

ONE OF THE YOUNGER GIRLS

Impetuously.

I love her! What do you think, Minnie? Do you think she looks like a goddess?

MINNIE

I think she is herself — that makes her a goddess!

THIRD GIRL

You always talk such conundrums, Minnie. How could she be anyone but herself?

MINNIE

Easily — we none of us are.

THIRD GIRL

Are what?

MINNIE

Ourselves.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Who inherits her Father's lack of humour.

Who are we then?

MINNIE

I am my Father in second edition, Lizzie is her Mother in abstract; you are —

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Well, what am I?

MINNIE

O never mind!

FIRST GIRL

Here comes Elsa!

Between the trees, at the East end of the Common, a young girl enters; her swift step gives the suggestion of winged feet. She bears herself proudly, and yet with a gracious directness and simplicity; she is tall, lithe, beautiful; she is dressed in unrelieved white; she carries an open book; this is Elsa.

THE GIRLS

Come, Elsa! Come, join our May-dance!

The Girls hold out the garland to Elsa and begin to sing again.

THE GIRLS

Singing.

“Weave, weave the garland gay” —

ELSA

O stop dancing — Girls. Sit down — listen — I have something to read to you! I have found the most delicious thing! It is a picture of what we all feel these days — these stirring days, when war is in the air.

Elsa sits upon the turf. The girls throw down the garland and seat themselves around her.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Elsa, did you know Jack is going to the war?

ELSA

With a nod of approbation.

Certainly — he is a soldier.

SECOND GIRL

Looking at Elsa keenly.

How about Philip?

ELSA

Evasively.

Philip is not a soldier.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Philip is a lawyer. Father told me yesterday that Philip has been offered a partnership with Stickley and Stowett. Father says that's wonderful for so young a man. Did you know it, Elsa?

ELSA

Philip told me. (*Drawing herself up, the colour rising in her cheeks*). I wish I were a man — *nothing* should keep me from this glorious war — this fight for the right.

SECOND GIRL

Aside.

Affectation.

ELSA

Shall I read?

THE GIRLS

Yes — Yes — Read!

ELSA

This is an ancient chronicle; — but it is as modern as we are! What joy to find in a book the things one has always said in one's own heart!

MINNIE

Isn't it? I had an idea, for a long while, which I cherished in secret and wouldn't tell anyone — I was afraid they would think me raving mad or an imbecile — one day I was reading a new scientific book of Father's, and there I found my secret idea set forth at great length as the newest discovery in science.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

What was it?

MINNIE

I wouldn't tell you for a tiara.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Why not?

MINNIE

You wouldn't think it proper.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Oh —!

FIRST GIRL

Go on, Elsa! Minnie, don't interrupt again. You always interrupt.

MINNIE

I always have something to say, that's the reason.

Two young men, Philip and Jack, appear at the left — the trees hide them — they are unseen by the girls, who are absorbed in Elsa and her book. Jack is a dapper, handsome little man with merry eyes and a pert moustache. Philip is tall and sinewy, as clean-shaven as a monk. His eyes are the eyes of a dreamer but his chin and mouth are the chin and mouth of a man of action and of power. He is not handsome — at least that is the first impression — but after one has decided that he is not handsome, one turns to look at him again. Few of the girls have decided the question, but the perpetual discussion of it between them holds evidence in Philip's favour.

ELSA

Turning over the leaves of her book.

I won't read the story — only this paragraph which I *must* share with you.

Reading with a responsive thrill in her voice.

“The Maiden was very beauteous to behold; she was the daughter of an ancient Sage, greatly honoured of all men. The Sage was a builder of books, of vast learning and of great knowledge. The renown of his wisdom had spread throughout the kingdoms of the world.

“Now the maiden cared not overmuch for the musty books and dusty parchments of her Father; she loved great and doughty deeds, perilous adventures, the clash of arms, and knights victorious, the crowned conqueror in the lists, the triumphant in battle.

“And lo! The Maiden sat in the ancient Hall of the moated castle, and suitors came to her — according to the choice and will of her Father. One came, a learned scholar, a master of languages long dead. One came, a tribune of the people, much versed in state-craft. One came who knew the science of the stars and the secrets of the earth.

“From beneath lowered lashes the Maiden looked on each — she looked and turned away.

“‘Thou art difficult to please, my Daughter,’ her Father said with grave displeasure.

“The Maiden answered with scornful lips and proud disdain, ‘Father, I will marry none but a Hero.’

“Straightway, she clasped her mantle around her, drew her veil across her face, and went out from the Hall into the forest. Deep in the heart of the forest, she threw back her veil, unclasped her mantle, and stretching wide her arms looked up to the sky, which glimpsed between the branches of the trees; she laughed softly and said over and over, as though it were a song she loved to sing,

“‘I will marry none but a Hero.’ She waited as for a reply, and then, added, still laughing low, ‘Books are dreary and stale; wisdom is for the aged and the weary; but a free-born maiden, with warm red blood throbbing through her veins, will only lay down the shield of her heart to a Man of Valour — a Doer of Deeds — a Hero.’ ”

Elsa pauses.

THE GIRLS

Clapping their hands.

Good — Good! Splendid! True!

Philip and Jack step out from behind the trees; the girls start with surprise, and rise.

JACK

My eyes, what a hoity-toity young lady! I say, Philip, she was a suffragette. Those men were well out of it with that minx!

PHILIP

She wasn't a minx, Jack, she was a sphinx.

ELSA

Quickly.

What was her riddle?

PHILIP

Her own heart.

JACK

I say, Elsa — heroes don't grow on bushes.

ELSA

Scornfully.

Alas! That is too true — they are rare enough to be museum specimens.

PHILIP

Speaking with mock solemnity.

Your analysis proves you have not studied the subject, Mademoiselle.

ELSA

With more heat than the fun warrants.

Indeed I have studied it — and searched for it — them, I mean — and I do not find it — them, I mean — except in books.

Philip looks at her a moment and then bows low.

PHILIP

In an inimitable voice.

O Maiden, more charming than wise,
'Tis not he who valiantly dies
Who alone is the Hero! Ah me!
The bravest of heroes is he
Who dares to look deep in your eyes.

The girls laugh.

ELSA

With bewitching mockery.

Sir Poet — of Stickley and Stowett! —
I pray you let your Hero know it;
If his valour depends
On the eyes of his friends,
It were better for him to forgo it.

The girls laugh.

JACK

That's one on you, Phil.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Holding out her hand to Philip with effusion.

I must congratulate you, Philip. Father told us about Stickley offering you a partnership. He said it was tremendous luck to be taken into that Firm.

PHILIP

Thank you.

MINNIE

O why did you come — you men? You have spoiled everything. Elsa, please read.

JACK

Yes, do, Elsa. I want to know what happened to that sphinx-minx in the woods. I'll bet she cried quarts before the day was up, and spoiled her best veil.

SEVERAL OF THE GIRLS

Read, Elsa. Read!

ELSA

Smiling.

In this presence? Never!

MINNIE

Well then, I'm going home, it is time for luncheon.

JACK

I call that mesmerism, Minnie. I have been *willing* you to go, for the last half hour.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Jack, are you really going to the war?

JACK

You bet I am!

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

How awful!

JACK

Awful? It's perfectly bully!

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

But you might get shot.

JACK

Shot? Imagine me shot! How would I look shot? That's not my style. No, my dear, I bear a charmed life. Bullets cannot penetrate the panoply of armour that I wear.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Really?

JACK

Really and truly, black and bluely. Ask Minnie.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

What does he mean, Minnie?

MINNIE

Scornfully.

I haven't the faintest idea; neither has he.

JACK

I say, Minnie, it isn't becoming to your beauty, when you curl your lip like that! If you don't start soon, I'll give up my belief in mesmerism.

MINNIE

Come, Elsa.

Elsa is far too clever to spoil a tête-à-tête.

ELSA

I want the air. I've not been dancing all the morning. *Au revoir.*

Minnie and Jack walk off together and the other girls follow, two by two. Elsa sits again upon the turf.

PHILIP

Courteously.

May I stay, Elsa?

ELSA

The Village Green is free.

PHILIP

Not now. When you are here it is royal ground.
I have something to tell you. May I stay?

Elsa waves her hand to the turf with a gracious acquiescence.

Philip throws himself upon the ground and looks up into her face. He looks at her a moment, then speaks as though compelled.

You are very beautiful.

ELSA

A trifle impatiently.

Is that your news? I do not like personalities.

PHILIP

Pardon me, that is your limitation. You should be so impersonal that you are above personalities; you should be so free from egoism that you are unconscious of the ego.

ELSA

Laughing.

You always make nonsense sound like sense,
Philip. What is your news?

PHILIP

I told you, the other day, of the good fortune that
has come to me —

ELSA

Somewhat scornfully.

O that! — (*She rises and makes a sweeping courtesy*). I salute you, Mr. Attorney-at-law — of
the firm of Stickley and Stowett — Counsellor,
Judge, Lord Chief Justice-to-be!

PHILIP

Seriously.

No — it is not that.

ELSA

Looking at him with sudden apprehension.

Has anything happened, Philip?

She sits again beside him.

PHILIP

I have thrown up the place — I have enlisted.

ELSA

With shining eyes.

Enlisted? — *You?*

PHILIP

Yes. Why not I? I have always intended to go, from the very first moment, but I did not talk of it. I should rather be a soldier than anything in the world! My fingers ache to punish that outrageous Nation for its cruel oppression — I long to be a part of the rescue to the oppressed. I waited, hoping that I might be able to get a Commission — I thought I could arrange it, but I cannot; I have no political pull; neither has Father; so I have enlisted as a private for a year. They think the war will be short, sharp and decisive. They are taking volunteers for a year. I shall have to win my Commission before the year is up.

ELSA

With kindling enthusiasm.

You will win it! Did you not always win, in all the games and in everything you ever tried to do?

PHILIP

Significantly.

No — not always, Elsa.

ELSA

Ignoring his evident meaning.

You will win in war.

PHILIP

I take that as a prophecy.

ELSA

Why did you not tell me you intended to go?

PHILIP

I did not tell anyone.

ELSA

With glowing cheeks.

But I am not *anyone* — and you talked with me only last week of your future. You told me of Stickley's offer.

PHILIP

With emotion.

That was the warrant for my daring. I should not have waited all these months except that I had to know my future was secure. After I left the University, I did not know where I stood; my luck came sooner than I thought; and the moment it came, I went to you, for then I had a warrant;

now, I have a double warrant — the Army and the Law; Stickley says he will keep my place open for any length of time. (*With a crestfallen air*). But —

ELSA

Interrupting, her cheeks glowing.

Philip, I will tell you a secret — a great secret. I was frantic the other night, when you spoke to me; I have been for weeks — disappointed, angry, — that you were settling down to Law when I felt you should go to war — to this glorious war!

PHILIP

Smiling.

That is no secret; I knew it all the time; and I knew, also, all the time, that I was going.

ELSA

Embarrassed.

Philip, you are so — so —

PHILIP

Well!

ELSA

So different from other men — (*after a pause, a sudden tenderness welling within her*).

Will you forgive me?

PHILIP

*Astonished at the word.**Forgive you?*

ELSA

Yes — for doubting you — for the limerick — O
for everything! Will you?

PHILIP

I love you.

Elsa starts — the colour sweeps over her face and brow.

I promised you, Elsa, that I would not speak to
you again, just yet — but — if I live —

ELSA

*Her voice trembling.**If you live!*

PHILIP

If I come home victorious — then I will ask you
once more the question of my heart.

*Elsa turns toward Philip; the colour deepens in her cheeks,
the light deepens in her eyes. She hesitates for a mo-
ment; she is about to lift the veil of her reserve; she looks
across the Common; then rises quickly, and as though
to throw off her emotion, speaks lightly and with the
bright gaiety for which she is distinguished.*

ELSA

I must go home at once or Mother will be sending out the Town Crier.

She starts to move away; Philip starts to follow her.

No, — please, — Philip. — Don't come. Look — John Judson is crossing the Common — intercept him — let me escape — I could not stand him just now.

She walks away swiftly.

PHILIP

Looking after her.

I will win! — And I will win her!

ACT I

SCENE II

ACT I

SCENE II

A WEEK LATER. MORNING

The Village Green

A group of excited and expectant boys on the Green.

THE BOYS

Singing.

Get your gun, get your gun,
And shoot them every one.
Let them fly, let them die,
Let them perish as they run.
Get your gun, get your gun,
O go and get your gun!

Several girls run in.

FIRST GIRL

Did you see the soldiers? Aren't they jolly? —
the brass buttons and the gold braid.

SECOND GIRL

My stars! How handsome the men look in their
uniforms!

THIRD GIRL

Do they march this afternoon?

FIRST BOY

Yes, and they are going to drill now, down by the Old Mill. Don't miss 'em.

Music is heard in the distance. The Boys all run off.

THE GIRLS

Come — let us go, too!

They follow the Boys.

Enter Elsa.

ELSA

Eagerly.

Martial music! How thrilling it all is! Even Jack looks transformed — and as for Philip —

Enter Philip, hurriedly; he wears the uniform of a private.

PHILIP

Elsa — I am glad — you are here — I went to your house — I feared I should miss you —

ELSA

Apprehensively.

What is it, Philip?

PHILIP

I came to say good-bye.

ELSA

Startled.

Good-bye? To-day? — I thought your regiment did not go until next week?

PHILIP

The plan is changed — we, also, march this afternoon.

He holds out his hand. Elsa silently puts her hand in his — he looks down at her earnestly; to his surprise he sees tears in her eyes; his face becomes illumined; his voice vibrant with emotion.

Elsa — I know, now, that I may hope.

Elsa unfastens a rose from her bodice and gives it to him for answer.

He kisses it.

A rose of promise! I will keep it until death.

ELSA

Trembling.

Don't say that word!

PHILIP

Laughing lightly.

I face death to find new life.

Elsa with effort throws off the shadow from her spirit.

ELSA

Don't you remember when we were at school, you called me "Sybil," for you said what I predicted always came to pass? Let me prophesy now. You will win — honor — victory — fame!

PHILIP

And then — Elsa?

ELSA

Fascinatingly.

O then you will be Captain.

PHILIP

And then — Elsa?

ELSA

Almost inaudibly.

You will be the 'Captain of my Soul.'

PHILIP

My Beloved.

He takes her hand and bends over it reverently.

The notes of a bugle are heard in the distance.

Elsa — I must go — Good-bye.

ELSA

Softly.

Good-bye.

She swallows a lump in her throat and blinks fast; she draws herself up, stands at attention and makes a salute, as she has seen the men do at drill; all the while she is laughing and sparkling.

Philip, catching the spirit of her resolve, gives the military salute, with distinction, and leaves her, marching off to the right; when he reaches the trees which will shut Elsa from his sight, he stands still, and looks back at her for a moment, his soul in his eyes. Then he disappears.

ELSA

Looking towards the trees which hide Philip from her sight.

O Philip — Philip —

She bursts into tears.

ACT I

SCENE III

ACT I

SCENE III

TWO MONTHS LATER. AFTERNOON

The Village Green

Two boys are wrestling. Four other boys, standing about, applaud and urge them on.

FIRST BOY

Go it, Jim — I bet on you.

SECOND BOY

Give it to him, Billy — Give it to him!

A Seventh Boy, greatly excited, runs in from the left.

SEVENTH BOY

Shouting.

Hello! D'you want to hear the news?

The boys stop wrestling and all gather around him with curiosity; with much satisfaction, he keeps them waiting a few minutes, holding his news in leash and looks from one to the other with an air of importance.

FIRST BOY

Out with it! Out with it!

SECOND BOY

What's the matter with you?

SEVENTH BOY

With the air of a herald.

We've won a battle!

Great excitement follows.

SECOND BOY

Honest? No guy?

SEVENTH BOY

Honest Injun. News just come in. — Whipped 'em to a frazzle!

The boys set up a loud cheer and begin to make things generally hideous with antics and noise.

FIRST BOY

Looking across the Common.

Cheese it! Cheese it! Stop your hollering. There comes the G. O. M.

SECOND BOY

O he doesn't mind noise. Hurrah — he's home again! He's a brick!

THIRD BOY

You bet he's a brick.

FIRST BOY

He's a cracker-jack and golly but he's rich!

FOURTH BOY

He's a brick and a cracker-jack all right, but he preaches too much.

THIRD BOY

Shut up! His preaching's a sight better than the Rector's. It hasn't got any religion in it.

FIRST BOY

O yes it has; it's got the kind of religion that gets inside of you.

FOURTH BOY

In an awed voice.

Father says he's an awful infidel.

FIRST BOY

What are you giving us? It's a blamed shame to call the G. O. M. names and don't you forget it. Look at this town — what would it be if it weren't for him?

FOURTH BOY

Who is a prig.

Giving money and building buildings don't make a man good. No Sir-ee! There he is! Maybe he'll tell us about his trip.

FIRST BOY

Gee hoo! There's the Rector coming the other way, no use trying to talk to the G. O. M. now. Let's run, lickety split! I haven't been to Sunday School in a month. No juvenile court for me this afternoon, if you please.

SECOND BOY

Nor for me — not on your life!

The boys give the street yell and run away just as Mr. Greart enters at the left and the Rector enters at the right.

Mr. Greart is a very young man very many years old. He has silver white hair, eyes as brown as a robin's and as keen as an eagle's. He has an irresistible smile, and carries himself as erect and as straight as an old pine tree of the forest; every boy, every girl, and every little child in

the village loves Greart. He is lavishly generous to the children, but his generosity is tonical and not enervating. He stimulates rather than spoils them by his indulgences.

The Rector is a pompous man with an ingratiating smile, but expressionless eyes; he wears extreme clerical dress — he lifts his hat with exaggerated deference, and speaks in low unctuous tones.

THE RECTOR

Good morning, Mr. Greart — Good morning! Glad to see you home again. I hope you are well, Sir — quite well?

MR. GREART

Thank you, Doctor, I am very ill.

THE RECTOR

Ill, Sir? — Ill? — You don't tell me; I am sorry to hear that. Nothing serious, I hope — nothing serious.

MR. GREART

The most serious thing in civilization — War.

THE RECTOR

Puzzled.

I don't think I follow you, Sir, I don't think I follow you.

MR. GREART

This accursed war has made me bilious.

THE RECTOR

Accursed war, Sir? Why, this is God's holy war.

MR. GREART

Laughing.

That is the kind of God you worship? No wonder the churches are empty!

THE RECTOR

Drawing himself up.

We number three hundred and fifty communicants, and the present Confirmation Class numbers twenty-five — a goodly number — a goodly number.

MR. GREART

My dear Doctor, don't you know that your communicants might number three hundred thousand, if you preached a logical God?

THE RECTOR

Ingratiatingly.

Pardon me, my dear Mr. Greart, if I make a suggestion, in a friendly way, all in a friendly way.

This habit of facetiousness you indulge in, I fear affects your influence. *I* understand it, my dear Sir, but others may not. I know that your heart is in the right place. It is true that you are not a member of the Church, but you are most generous to Her, always. By the by, I really must thank you again, although you forbade me, for our most magnificent Parish House. You don't know what you have done for us — you don't know what you have done.

MR. GREART

I know perfectly well; you needed it sadly. I did it for the children.

THE RECTOR

It was not for the children that you added my ample and luxurious study — it was a munificent gift, Mr. Greart, a munificent gift, and I thank you.

MR. GREART

Cordially.

I am glad you like it, Doctor; your life of self-sacrifice deserves good gifts.

THE RECTOR

Elated.

You are very generous in what you say — praise from Sir Hubert, you know! — Praise from Sir Hubert!

MR. GREART

By the by, Doctor, I wish you would let me add a theatre to the Parish House, and give the children good plays on Sunday after Sunday School.

THE RECTOR

Mr. Greart! — I really — I must say — A theatre after Sunday School!

MR. GREART

You know we differ, Doctor.

THE RECTOR

Yes, Sir — but I had hoped — it has been a great pleasure to see you in the sanctuary, of late — a very great pleasure.

MR. GREART

It amuses me to go.

THE RECTOR

Startled.

Amuses you, Sir?

MR. GREART

Lack of logic always amuses me. Logic is the foundation of life.

THE RECTOR

Irritated.

I fail to understand you, Mr. Greart.

MR. GREART

The last Sunday I was at Church, before I went away, you talked most eloquently about the God of Battles, and ended with an invocation to the God of Peace; how can a logical God possibly be a God of Battles and a God of Peace at the same time?

THE RECTOR

Peace after battle, Mr. Greart, Peace after battle.

MR. GREART

That is not Peace, that is merely the cessation of hostilities, merely a negation. Peace is a positive — a great constructive, conclusive, abiding

force — an altitude of the soul — the soul of a person or the soul of a nation.

THE RECTOR

My dear Sir, if you read history —

MR. GREART

Interrupting.

I *have* read history, that's what's the matter. I find that all the wars in the world have never stopped war. The clever philosopher, Christ, who had a way of seeing all around a subject, was quite right when He said, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" — they always do — it has been the final nemesis, sooner or later, of all warlike nations.

THE RECTOR

In a reproachful and solemn tone.

Our blessed Lord, Who is not a *philosopher* but Who is "Very God of Very God" said, "I come not to bring Peace but a sword."

MR. GREART

A trifle sharply.

I cannot hear Christ's words so misinterpreted; I admire Him too profoundly.

THE RECTOR

With asperity.

Tut, tut — Mr. Greart.

MR. GREART

The word Christ used is separation, division, — “I come not to bring Peace but Separation.” Even if sword is the correct translation, it is perfectly manifest it is used as an illustration. Christ says — “I came not to send Peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” Do you think the great Teacher meant for one moment that it was His mission to bring a sword — *as such* — between a mother and a daughter? — Fiddle-de-dee!

THE RECTOR

Growing red in the face.

I must say —

MR. GREART

For Heaven’s sake, why can’t we use the same common sense in interpreting the words of Christ that we do in interpreting the words of any other

writer or teacher? Shakespeare, for example, says — "Jocund day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

Nobody is fool enough to argue from those words that Shakespeare thought day was a veritable maiden with actual toes.

THE RECTOR

Distinctly ruffled.

Really, Mr. Greart, you have a most irreverent way of speaking; at times you seem almost profane.

MR. GREART

I can understand a man defending war on pagan grounds, but I protest in the name of Justice against making Christ an apologist for war; he is the Apostle of Peace, and it irritates me to have perfectly manifest meanings twisted to suit the belligerent spirit of humanity. In this instance, at least, which is the one most often quoted, it is quite ridiculous to believe that the word sword is not used as an illustration of separation. There is always a sharp sword of separation dividing two persons of diametrically opposite views of life — dividing you and me, for example.

THE RECTOR

With an assumption of dignity.

I fear we are very definitely divided.

MR. GREART

Goodnaturedly.

Certainly; I believe in Peace; you believe in War; the sword of the spirit separates us completely.

THE RECTOR

Losing his temper.

Do you mean to say that I do not believe in Peace?

I — I? —

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace!”

MR. GREART

With one lung you do breathe the benediction of Peace most eloquently, but with the other, my Friend, you certainly blow the trumpet of Battle!

THE RECTOR

Stiffly.

I bid you good morning, Mr. Greart.

MR. GREART

Holding out his hand in a way no one could resist.

Now please don't be offended, Doctor. I cannot for the life of me mix the two any more than I can mix darkness and daylight. It is all a matter of logic; if you can show me how to do it, I shall be grateful, for I delight in mental gymnastics.

THE RECTOR

Faith is higher than logic, Mr. Greart — Faith is higher than logic.

MR. GREART

I grant you that — as much higher as the arch springing from the pavement is higher than the foundation; but it must be a faith founded on logic.

THE RECTOR

Softening to a patronising tone.

You have, sometimes, a strange manner, Mr. Greart, but I think you are all right at heart.

MR. GREART

With his irresistible smile.

Thank you. Doctor, I like your article on "Bees" in "The Country Gentleman." I read it with much interest. It is well done.

THE RECTOR

Much mollified.

That is very kind of you. I hope I shall see you at Even Song to-day, Mr. Greart. We are to have a special thanksgiving for this great victory vouchsafed to us.

A quizzical look comes into Mr. Greart's eyes; he has often been heard to say that he finds few things so humorous as the Rector's utter lack of the sense of humour.

MR. GREART

That reminds me. I had a most remarkable dream last night.

THE RECTOR

Dreams interest me extremely. Since the time of Joseph they have been significant.

MR. GREART

I wonder, Doctor, if you can interpret my dream for me!

THE RECTOR

Pray let me hear it.

MR. GREART

I dreamed that I stood upon a high place between the heavens and the earth, and I saw before me a

beautiful angel with shining opalescent wings, and I knew in my dream that it was Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer. He, it is, the legend says, who stands ready to carry the prayers of the children of men to the Lord of Hosts.

THE RECTOR

Most interesting, my dear Sir, most interesting. I know the old legend well.

MR. GREART

And in my dream, it was as in the legend, the prayers, ascending, changed into flowers that Sandalphon might carry them to the Lord. And I heard a mighty murmur —

“Save this people, O Lord!

“Deliver us from the hands of our enemies. Abate their pride, assuage their malice, smite them and bring destruction upon them. Grant us victory, O Lord.” And I knew it was the prayers of the men of the East going forth to war with the men of the West. As I waited, I heard another mighty murmur —

“Save this people, O Lord!

“Deliver us from the hands of our enemies. Abate their pride, assuage their malice, smite them and

bring destruction upon them. Grant us victory, O Lord."

And I knew it was the prayers of the men of the West, going forth to fight the men of the East. There stood Sandalphon — and I assure you, he looked as puzzled as a Dutch lawyer.

THE RECTOR

Growing angry.

Tut, tut — Mr. Greart!

MR. GREART

A tough problem for Sandalphon, wasn't it? Most embarrassing position, I must say, to carry to the Lord the same prayers from opposite camps. You are right, Doctor; faith is higher than logic, but one side or the other is up against it, in *that* kind of faith.

THE RECTOR

Sir — Sir —

MR. GREART

No offence, Doctor! It was only a dream.

To the manifest relief of the Rector, who is glad of any straw to save the situation, Elsa comes tripping across the Common.

THE RECTOR

Holding out his hand to detain her.

How do you do, Elsa?

ELSA

Shaking hands.

How do you do, Rector. Isn't the news splendid?

Turning to Mr. Greart, holding out her hand to him.

Mr. Greart, I am so glad to see you! We have missed you! The village is not the same place when you are away.

MR. GREART

Thank you, Elsa.

ELSA

Turning to the Rector.

I've had a letter from Jack — all is going famously!

THE RECTOR

Teasingly.

No letter from Philip?

ELSA

Frankly, the colour rising to her cheeks.

Yes, from Philip, also.

With enthusiasm.

He is making his mark! He doesn't say so — he is too modest, but I see it between the lines, and Jack says he is winning distinction every day.

MR. GREART

Philip is a fine fellow!

THE RECTOR

Elsa, what do you think? Mr. Greart doesn't approve of the war; we have been having quite an argument on the subject.

ELSA

Looking at Mr. Greart in surprise.

You do not approve of this war?

MR. GREART

Smiling.

My dear young lady! When you open those great eyes of yours like that, and fix them upon me in reproach, I am so rattled that I do not know what I do or do not believe.

ELSA

Pleadingly.

No, but seriously Mr. Greart, don't you think this war is glorious? Don't you think it is our

duty to punish a Nation that has behaved so abominably?

MR. GREART

I do not precisely see the logic of behaving abominably ourselves in order to punish another Nation for behaving abominably to some one else.

ELSA

Impatiently.

That is not fair!

MR. GREART

In a more serious tone.

My child, I do not believe in war.

ELSA

Amazed.

You do not believe in war?

MR. GREART

Smiling.

Never — for any reason whatsoever.

ELSA

With the air of a doctrinaire.

What would become of the manly virtues?

MR. GREART

Now, Elsa, you are not speaking your own language. You are using the idioms of tradition. Your words sound like your Father and your Grandfather.

ELSA

Impetuously.

All right, then; I will say it in my own words. I do not want my brother, nor my men friends, to be molly-mushes.

THE RECTOR

Excellent, Elsa! Excellent!

MR. GREART

My fair Hypatia, if you are teaching young men, let me recommend you to a certain valuable old book, a Book of Life and Truth, which hits the bull's eye with unerring precision every time. There you will find these words — "He that ruleth his spirit" is better "than he that taketh a city." You may teach your young men that there is the fullest scope for every manly virtue, every virile quality in the category for the man who even *tries* to conquer himself.

ELSA

With an impatient toss of her head.

What would a Nation be without its heroes?

MR. GREART

Nothing; but let us have the Heroes of the Durable.

THE RECTOR

Heroes of the Durable? I do not follow you.

ELSA

What *do* you mean by Heroes of the Durable?
It sounds like an incantation.

MR. GREART

Do you know what Napoleon said at St. Helena?

ELSA

With enthusiasm.

He is one of my Heroes! I thought I had read everything he ever said, but I do not remember anything about the "Heroes of the Durable."

MR. GREART

He did not use that term, but he said this: "The more I study the world, the more am I convinced

of the inability of brute force to create anything durable."

ELSA

Did Napoleon say that?

MR. GREART

He did; but he said it too late; he said it after he had shed rivers of blood, mangled myriad armies, desolated and depopulated the world; we may learn of him and arrive at his final conclusion in the beginning, if we will.

ELSA

With heat.

He didn't mean it! He only said it to get even with his destiny when he was at St. Helena, and could not use brute force any longer.

MR. GREART

What did Napoleon gain by all the barren glory of his arms?

ELSA

Ardently.

He gained my love!

MR. GREART

With old-fashioned gallantry.

That is the first argument that I have ever heard in favour of war that has made the slightest impression upon me.

ELSA

Thoughtfully.

How can there be *Heroes* of the Durable?

MR. GREART

Those who have sacrificed self to service — the Scientists, the Educators, the Upbuilders of the Nation, the Reformers, those are the true heroes — those who give and spend themselves for the Durable — the eternal forces of life.

ELSA

With glowing cheeks and eyes.

You may have them all! Give me the brave fighters; keen-eyed, long-limbed, daring soldiers, who go forth fearlessly to fight for the Right, ready to spend their strength and spill their blood for their country.

Mr. Greart looks at Elsa admiringly and smiles at her enthusiasm.

THE RECTOR

Dogmatically.

This is the world we live in, Mr. Greart, a world of flesh and blood — Eternity lies beyond.

MR. GREART

Eternity is *now*! If eternity has not begun now, then there is none beyond.

Elsa ponders these words; the Rector opens his mouth to answer but changes his mind and the subject at the same time.

THE RECTOR

Come to the Rectory and have a cup of tea. My wife will be glad to see you.

MR. GREART

Thank you, but you must excuse me. I am already late for an engagement. Good afternoon, Elsa. Good afternoon, Doctor.

THE RECTOR

Good afternoon, Sir.

ELSA

Farewell — I will see you to-morrow.

Exit Mr. Greart.

THE RECTOR

With Pharisaic precision.

"A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

ELSA

Indignantly.

Rector! If Mr. Greart can't enter Heaven, then I do not wish to go there.

THE RECTOR

Do not speak like that, Elsa. It is not seemly. (*Smiling indulgently*). But I thought you did not agree with Mr. Greart.

ELSA

About war? Of course I do not agree with him. He is entirely, completely, outrageously wrong about *that*; but I do not have to agree with him to know he is just the cleverest, dearest, noblest, truest —

THE RECTOR

Interrupting.

Come! Come! Elsa! What will be left for your old Rector?

ELSA

Mischievously.

I do not see any *old* Rector.

THE RECTOR

*Who has a secret but well-known pride in the preservation of
his face and form.*

Well, well, you always know how to get out of a pit.
Will you come to the Rectory for tea?

*The sound of drums is heard in the distance and Elsa's
twinkling feet keep time to the tattoo.*

ELSA

With pleasure!

ACT II

SCENE I

ACT II

SCENE I

THREE MONTHS LATER

In the Enemy's Country

A room that was once exquisitely dainty, but is now muddy, dirty, and enveloped in tobacco smoke. Delicate feminine articles lie soiled or broken on the floor. A soldier is lounging in a plush chair, his feet upon a low carved table from which have fallen several bits of bric-a-brac. He has in his hand a dainty little fan with the end of which he is stuffing tobacco into his pipe. Four other soldiers are playing cards at a table.

Philip, in uniform, sits at an open piano and drums upon the keys.

FIRST SOLDIER

Shouting.

Hie, you girl, there! Hurry up with that beer! Don't forget the biscuit and cheese. Damn it! What keeps you so long?

Philip continues to play.

SECOND SOLDIER

Throwing down a card.

I play the ace. Give us a song, Gordon!

A young girl enters bearing a pitcher of foaming beer and a tray with glasses, biscuit, and cheese. She is a slight refined girl. She is trembling, and her face is very pale; baffled hatred is in her eyes; she hurriedly places the tray and the beer on the table, and turns to leave the room; as she reaches the door the First Soldier, the one who is lounging in the chair, springs after her.

FIRST SOLDIER

Putting his arm around her.

By gad, those lips are sweeter than cheese!

The girl clinches her frail hands and beats them upon the burly breast of the man; her eyes blaze.

THE GIRL

I will kill you, if you kiss me!

The Soldier laughs; the other Soldiers laugh, also.

FIRST SOLDIER

Kill me? Ha, Ha! My pretty butterfly — Nip away! Do you think you can stop me?

Philip jumps suddenly from the piano-stool and surprises the man by seizing his arms from behind, thus making him release his hold of the girl.

PHILIP

Curtly.

I can, if she can't.

The Girl, released, runs away.

The Soldier, red and angry, faces Philip. He lunges at Philip; they close and wrestle. The man is an excellent shot but no athlete; Philip is both; they wrestle for a few minutes, the others look up from their cards with interest. Finally, Philip, by a quick turn, throws the man on his knees. The Soldiers cheer.

FIRST SOLDIER

Yielding.

All right — we're quits.

PHILIP

Calmly, going back to the piano.

We will be, if you leave that young lady alone — otherwise —

He strikes a chord and begins to sing.

The pipers pipe, the drummers beat,
We hear the sound of tramping feet;
Our merry men are marching fast;
For the trumpet blows the welcome blast,
O the trumpet blows the welcome blast!

Our gallant troop is glad and gay!
As we laughing ride away, away,
We care not what we leave behind;
For the scent of war is on the wind,
O the scent of war is on the wind!

The Soldier has come to the piano, during the song, and, leaning on it, has listened; slowly his anger has changed to good humour.

FIRST SOLDIER

That's jolly! I won't bear you any grudge, but — say — I think it was damned priggish to spoil a kiss!

PHILIP

Still playing.

It's not priggish to protect a young lady from being insulted — and if it is — I'll continue to be a prig.

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS AT THE CARD TABLE

A man who fights as Gordon did, yesterday, can't be called a prig, no matter how moral he is.

SECOND SOLDIER

He has earned the right to kiss any girl he wants, or prevent another fellow from kissing her if he wants to. If it hadn't been for him, yesterday —

PHILIP

Impatiently.

O give us a rest!

He strikes loud chords on the piano to drown their words.

FIRST SOLDIER

Leaning on the piano and talking so loudly that his voice rises above the din of Philip's music.

Say — I was only taking the rights of war.

PHILIP

Scornfully, emphasising his words with loud musical chords.

The rights of war! The rights of war! We fight, we win a battle, we invade this country, we come to this house, we take possession of it; a mother is dying up stairs, the servants have run away, a young inexperienced girl is alone. We desecrate the house, smash her jimcracks — (*waving his hand towards the room*). We smoke out her violet perfume with rank tobacco, make her wait on us and then kiss her by force! By Jove! It cuts!

FIRST SOLDIER

She's damned lucky. If she had lived years ago — in fact, if she lived now in Turkey or any other barbarous country — she would be lying in a pool of blood. But in civilised warfare —

PHILIP

Impatiently.

In civilised warfare we can be as uncivilised as we please provided it is "*civilised warfare*."

FIRST SOLDIER

O dry up! You sing better than you talk — go on — sing us another song.

PHILIP

Not until I have had some beer.

Philip goes to the table and helps himself to beer.

ACT II

SCENE II

ACT II

SCENE II

EIGHT MONTHS LATER

In the Enemy's Country. Twilight

The wooded border of a battle-field after a battle. In the far distance are seen men and horses lying on the ground, and from the distance are heard confused, awful sounds. In the foreground is the entrance to a quiet bit of woodland.

Philip, in the uniform of a lieutenant, is standing on the edge of the woods. Sick at the horrors, he draws a long breath of relief as he leaves the terrible scene of carnage behind and approaches this peaceful place. Having done his duty of search, he is again at high tension from the intoxicating delight of victory and the virile aftermath of the lust of battle; he is in haste to reach the camp to mess with his rollicking comrades and discourse upon the glories of war and the delight in this signal victory; he is congratulating himself he has gotten beyond those fragments of human beings, those mangled masses of his fellow-men. It has been a long-fought battle and it is a gory field. Philip has had some nerve-racking services to perform in the last four hours. The battle ended at three o'clock; it is now seven. He is very hungry and tired, although he is too excited to realise this.

PHILIP

Drawing a long breath.

Thank God, I am out of that!

From the shadow of one of the trees comes a prolonged groan.

Philip goes to the place from whence it comes and sees one of the Enemy, lying on the ground. The man had crawled out of the vortex of horror some hours before, had reached this quiet place, had become unconscious and is now coming back to conscious suffering; his eyes are bright with fever.

PHILIP

Stooping over him with eager solicitude.

What may I do for you, my Friend?

THE ENEMY

Hoarsely.

You have ripped open my side — you have blown off my arm — you have torn my face — I don't think I care to have you do anything more, thank you.

Philip pours water from his canteen and holds it to the Enemy's lips.

PHILIP

Here — take this water.

THE ENEMY

Turning away.

Water — from you? Not if I were in Hell!

PHILIP

Please take it from me — We are both soldiers.

THE ENEMY

I'm not a soldier now — I am just a man — blown to atoms — and cut to shreds — going out into the dark.

PHILIP

You are feverish. Please take this water.

THE ENEMY

I am not feverish. I am perfectly sane — sane — for the first time in all my life. I see clearly for the first time — I tell you death takes the blood-mist from our eyes.

PHILIP

Then, if you are sane, remember your code.

THE ENEMY

Code be damned! Men trick themselves with lies. I see it all now — all the artificial stuff I have

talked all my life. I am a lying hypocrite. Military glory — heroism — bravery! Bah! Why, I wouldn't blow a dog to atoms, for any reason, as I have blown my fellow-men for years — and never thought about it — as you have blown me.

PHILIP

Sternly.

Don't say that again!

THE ENEMY

With a harsh laugh.

Ha! How particular we are about names! Call a man a brave soldier and his gold-embroidered breast swells, he is puffed up with pride. Call a man a murderer and he is ready to knock you down.

He coughs, loses his breath for a moment, then continues, smiling grimly.

You can't knock me down any farther — I am in the dust now — the dust of which I shall soon be a part.

Philip takes a flask from his pocket and holds it to the Enemy's lips.

PHILIP

You must take this brandy.

The Enemy refuses the brandy.

THE ENEMY

Laughing hoarsely.

Of course! If I continued to talk the language of lies I should be a regulation specimen of military tradition. But as I speak the bald truth, you think I am a wandering lunatic. You *are* a murderer, and don't you forget it — But — so — am — I.

With rasping emphasis.

We trick our minds, and do not think, and if, by chance, we do accomplish the difficult task of thinking, *we don't think straight*. My God! I have been thinking straight since I lay in this pool of blood. You talk about the code! What is the first fetich of the code? It is *the unity of the army*. If the army is a unit, *working together*, then *each man* has his share in *each act* of the whole;— every man that falls on the other side falls by the *purpose* — the *intent* of each soldier in the army, and *intent* is the basis of crime. I have killed in my time — let me see — I have been adding up since I lay here, before I fainted — let me see — what was it? I have been in the army ten years — I have killed about ninety-five thousand men at the least — probably more — Yes — I have killed *ninety-five thousand men!* — I am going to my

Mother's God with the murder of *ninety-five thousand men* on my soul — What shall I say to Him?

A look of awe comes into the Enemy's eyes.

What shall I say to Him?

PHILIP

I have never heard anything so utterly mad. You must take this brandy.

Again, Philip puts the brandy to his mouth; again, the Enemy pushes it away.

THE ENEMY

The moment the scales fall from a man's eyes and he begins to *use his brains*, men give him brandy and say he is mad.

PHILIP

If you are sane, you will die like a soldier.

THE ENEMY

O I'll die like a soldier all right — *that* doesn't trouble me — what troubles me is that I've been *killing like a soldier* for ten years — I tell you, dying opens the door and one sees a new view. I thought I was a fine hero and I find I'm just a common murderer — a wholesale murderer!

PHILIP

Persuasively.

Please hush!

THE ENEMY

Talking rapidly.

Wait until you come to die, and see how differently you will see everything — that is — if you *let yourself look* — most men don't — they die with their eyes shut — as they have lived! (*After a pause*). There is another thing — I thought I was an atheist — I could find no scientific proof of God — but — I believe I believe in my Mother's God; I can't get away from Him. He has tracked me, — He has run me down. And now I am going to stand face to face with Him, straight from this Hell — which I made — with the murder of ninety-five thousand men on my soul — ninety-five thousand!

PHILIP

For God's sake, don't say that again — it is hideous.

THE ENEMY

Of course it is hideous, because it is true. If our boasted Unity means anything — then each man

the army killed as a whole, *I killed in intent*, as a part of that whole.

PHILIP

Irrelevantly.

But the glory of dying for one's country!

THE ENEMY

With harsh emphasis.

I told you before and I tell you again — *that's* not the question. I am glad to die for my Country! That's all right! But I know — now that I come to die — that it is not so glorious to *sin* for Her.

PHILIP

Impatiently.

Sin for Her?

THE ENEMY

Yes, sin for Her! Killing is against the Law — the law of God — the law of Society — the inner law of Conscience. Calling it fine names doesn't change it. It has been murder in the first degree, for it was intent. Every shot the army fired was *intended* — *aimed* — *planned* to kill, and I was a part of each *purpose* — each *intent*.

After a pause.

I never bothered with religion, but I worked hard in settlement work and talked all the jargon of the day. I spent two whole nights, once, trying to save a poor wretch for his family; and yet, I have blown to bits ninety-five thousand of my fellow-men — and never thought about it! Isn't it funny?

PHILIP

Distressed.

I must not argue with you — you are too ill; but perhaps it will comfort you if I remind you that, when men fight for principle, for a moral question, the intent is justified.

THE ENEMY

Excitedly.

O it doesn't hurt me to talk. You are right — *I am* feverish — It hasn't made me delirious — it has cleared my brain, but it strings up my tongue — to talk. You may argue all you will but, for God's sake, don't talk twaddle to a dying man!

PHILIP

It is the truth.

THE ENEMY

Excitedly.

It is not the truth. Once, when I was sheriff, I

protected an assassin from being torn to pieces by the mob, which he really deserved. He had killed *one* man only, and, by the measure of his own conscience, he had — what was to him — a high-flown moral motive. I talked with him and really felt him to be sincere — and yet I *loathed* him; and I have shot ninety-five thousand men and patted myself on the back for a soldier. Bosh! A sane mind that thinks straight can't make those two codes match.

PHILIP

Pardon me, my dear Sir, but you are quite crazy!

THE ENEMY

Smiling grimly.

You mean dying has made me quite sane — at last. Listen to me — Here we are — two Nations with different traditions, different religions, different standards of morals — why, it is only the educated amongst us who can even speak each other's language — how can we understand each other's point of view? I felt, when I came to this war, that if ever a Nation had been base and false, You had — a breaker of faith — a meddler — a —

PHILIP

Sternly.

That will do!

THE ENEMY

I honestly did; and — you seem an honest man — perhaps you had something of the same feeling about us —

PHILIP

Sharply.

Rather!

THE ENEMY

There you go! Now don't you see we can't both be right — we can't both be working for a true principle — it's tommy-rot. You kill me for righteousness and I kill you for righteousness — Don't you see it's silly? Don't you see that the only thing that might justify murder becomes its condemnation? If you and I each honestly thought we were morally right, then it was a matter for arbitration, not for murder.

PHILIP

In distress.

My Friend! If I did not do it before, I am certainly committing murder now by permitting you to talk.

THE ENEMY

With the first touch of pathos in his voice.

O let me talk! Let me talk! I shall be quiet enough soon! It eases me to talk. Ever had fever? Something flames within you and it loosens the tension to talk. I could talk — and talk — and talk — and —

He loses consciousness. Philip bends over him and bathes his face with water; after a moment, the Enemy opens his eyes.

PHILIP

With solicitude.

I must go for help — our men are near.

THE ENEMY

Laughing hoarsely.

That's funny too. Blow a man to pieces in the name of patriotism, and then try to patch the pieces together in the name of humanity. It's really comic when you come to think about it — I won't be party to such a farce any longer. There's no help for me now, and besides — I wouldn't take it from an enemy!

There is an awful silence, broken only by the ominous sound in the man's throat and by piteous sounds that come from the battle-field.

THE ENEMY

His voice broken and failing.

Mary — Mary — the roses — in the garden —
Put your head upon my breast — No — it is wet
with blood — it will hurt your beautiful hair.

*Philip, very pale and with something new in his eyes, leans
over the Enemy.*

THE ENEMY

Brokenly.

Universal Brotherhood — those are your words,
Mary! Say, old Chap — give us your hand —

*He tries to move his only hand toward Philip. Philip takes it
tenderly.*

THE ENEMY

Uni — vers — al Brotherhood —

He dies.

*The twilight fades and all is dark. After a time, out of the
darkness, the voice of Philip is heard speaking slowly in
level tones.*

PHILIP

He is my Brother — and I have killed him!

ACT II

SCENE III

ACT II

SCENE III

THE NEXT DAY

In the Enemy's Country. Sunrise

A wooded place about a quarter of a mile from the battle-field.

Philip, with a face as grey as ashes, and with head bent in profound thought, is walking through the woods.

The General enters from the right.

Philip straightens himself and salutes.

THE GENERAL

Cordially.

Ah! Lieutenant. You are the very man I wished to see. I was intending to send for you this morning. I took note of you again, yesterday. (*Scanning his face*). Beelzebub! What's the matter? Not used to fields after battle, eh? You'll get used to it, young man, as you get older. A fighter like you gets over being squeamish. Don't like battle-fields myself — they turn my stomach the next day, but I had to come out to look for some of my boys; they go too fast, poor fellows! But God be praised! There are others to take their places.

You will step into Captain Mett's shoes. You fought like a tiger, yesterday. I watched you.

PHILIP

In a tone of distress.

Please don't, Sir.

THE GENERAL

Why Don't? Modest, eh? I like that. I will see to it that you have the Commission at once.

PHILIP

Very pale.

I cannot take it, Sir.

THE GENERAL

Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils! Are you crazy?

PHILIP

I do not know — perhaps — but —

THE GENERAL

Have you seen a ghost?

PHILIP

Solemnly.

Yes, Sir.

The General laughs.

I have seen the Holy Ghost.

THE GENERAL

'Pon my soul — you are a blasphemous young devil!

PHILIP

With hesitation.

I have had a vision of — of — what I suppose men call the Holy Spirit — I have been face to face with it all night — It is something one cannot put into words.

THE GENERAL

Curtly.

I beg you will not try to put it into words — the less said about it, the better! If you have been up all night you need your breakfast — that's what's the matter with you. Go — Get it! Then come to me and talk sense.

I salute you, Captain.

The General salutes playfully and goes off to the left. Philip salutes the General, looking after him affectionately, as he walks away with firm military bearing.

PHILIP

Desperately.

How *can* I make him see? I should rather storm a breach or scale a wall than face that talk with him. He has been kind, so very good to me.

But, the truth seems clear to me now, the arguments unanswerable — all night they have been marshalling themselves — yet I can foresee the utter futility of trying to make him see. I can foresee the iron-clad impregnability of his mind. Leave the army? — Refuse a Commission? — Refuse ever to pull the trigger again or use the sword? — Request only to carry the colours until my time is served? — He will not strike me in anger — he is too just for that, and too discerning; — but God knows that bullets would be soft compared with the epithets I can hear him hurling at me — “lunatic,” “idiot,” “fool,” and — worst of all — “sentimentalist.” And yet, God help me, I can do no other way. I *must* stop killing my fellow-men. Last night, it was as though a door opened in my mind, and through the long night I thought and thought — and fought and fought. Tradition, false standards fell away. I saw the ethical contradiction of war.

True civilisation must mean Construction — not Destruction; it must be unto Life — not unto Death. There *must* be a better way to settle our difficulties, and every man who accepts war helps to retard the finding of that better way. I never thought of that before — but now that I *have* thought of it, I dare not go on.

After a pause.

Captain! — Captain! And I must give it up!
What is any fight compared to a fight like this — a
fight with my own soul? — I hoped — I worked —
I won — and now — Elsa! Elsa! I have lost you!

*He throws himself upon the ground beside a tree and covers
his face with his hands.*

ACT III

SCENE I

ACT III

SCENE I

ONE MONTH LATER

In the Enemy's Country

A wooded place. Three soldiers are sitting on the ground drinking heavily and singing.

THE SOLDIERS

Singing.

O here's to the Girl,
With the bonny, bonny curl,
And the laughing eyes of blue!
I told her we must part;
And it broke her tender heart,
Though I vowed I would be true.

I can see her even yet,
With her pretty cheeks as wet
As the roses bathed in dew.
O the bonny, bonny Girl,
With the bonny, bonny curl,
And tears in her eyes of blue!

FIRST SOLDIER

That white-livered Gordon goes, to-morrow, thank God! He contaminates the camp.

SECOND SOLDIER

The renegade! The cursed traitor! Let's beat him out of camp, with a leather strap! He hasn't fired a shot since that night. He ought to have been court-martialed. What's the matter with the General, anyhow?

FIRST SOLDIER

There is something behind all this — men don't throw up promotion for nothing and Generals don't let them. They say that he hoodooed the General. He offered a Commission to Gordon and he refused point blank to take it, snivelled to go home — and the General did not have him shot!

THIRD SOLDIER

But they say the General was furious; they had a terrible row and talked for hours.

FIRST SOLDIER

Scornfully.

Row? The only kind of a row he should have with a man like that was to shoot him like a weasel.

SECOND SOLDIER

He's let the damned traitor carry the flag.

THIRD SOLDIER

He had to serve until his time was up!

FIRST SOLDIER

It's up to-day, thank God! I am sick of seeing the coward.

THIRD SOLDIER

O give the devil his due! He carried the colours into the thickest of the fight every time. He seemed to be running after death.

SECOND SOLDIER

He's ashamed to live — that's why.

THIRD SOLDIER

That shows he isn't a coward, any way.

FIRST SOLDIER

I'd coward him if I got hold of him.

THIRD SOLDIER

Now, see here, I'm not stuck on him. And all this Sunday School peace business makes me

gag — this rot about arbitration — arbitration be damned! You might as well talk about two hungry bull-dogs arbitrating over a bone as to talk of angry nations arbitrating a quarrel! But I can't honestly call Gordon a coward. I think he's a fool, a blasted fool, but not a coward. It took more courage to do what he did than to fight a thousand battles, and he has been to the front ever since; why the devil he don't get shot the Lord only knows.

FIRST SOLDIER

He's dead already — that's why.

THIRD SOLDIER

Hold up now! He's a pretty live man, and don't you forget it! I'd advise you not to try any of your funny business with him.

The Soldiers glare at him.

FIRST SOLDIER

Holy Peter! What luck! There he comes! I'll give him a piece of my mind!

SECOND SOLDIER

I'll give him a taste of my fist!

The two Soldiers try to rise.

THIRD SOLDIER

Laying a detaining hand on his two companions.

Sit still you, both of you — you're too full to exchange compliments with anyone, just now.

FIRST SOLDIER

Let me alone, I say!

SECOND SOLDIER

Leave go!

Enter Philip in the uniform of a private. The First and Second Soldier break away from the detaining hand of the Third Soldier — they rise and go toward Philip unsteadily.

FIRST SOLDIER

In a thick voice.

So you are running away, Mr. Traitor!

SECOND SOLDIER

You are a disgrace to mankind, that's what you are.

Both Soldiers come nearer to Philip with clinched fists. Philip draws himself up to his full height, his eyes have that power of command, which holds the wild beast in leash with more surety than a blow; something powerful and compelling emanates from him; he speaks in the voice of one having authority.

PHILIP

Stand back!

FIRST SOLDIER

Insolently.

I want to give you a piece of my mind.

PHILIP

I am quite ready to hear it — go on!

Philip folds his arms and stands motionless. The Soldiers again start to go toward him.

Stand back! Not one step nearer!

The Soldiers instinctively fall back; they mutter something inaudible. The Third Soldier laughs.

I am waiting.

The Soldiers stand awkwardly.

Philip lifts his hat.

If you have nothing to say, I will bid you good morning.

Philip walks away; the two soldiers stare at him, open-mouthed.

THIRD SOLDIER

Sarcastically.

Why didn't you give him a taste of your tongue?
Why didn't you give him a taste of your fists?

FIRST SOLDIER

Holy Peter! There was a blue blaze in his eyes
that took it out of me.

SECOND SOLDIER

The liquor muddled me as I went to strike.

THIRD SOLDIER

Reflectively.

I wonder if it was the liquor?

ACT III

SCENE II

ACT III

SCENE II

FOUR WEEKS LATER

The Village Green as in Act First

Elsa and the same girls who were in the first scene are dancing on the Green to the music of their tamblourines.

FIRST GIRL

Stopping suddenly and looking over the Common.

Who is that? As sure as the sun shines, it's Philip Gordon!

Elsa starts and stands poised for the dance. The colour sweeps over her face, down to the white line of her dress at the throat and into the soft curls of the hair on her forehead. She looks over the Common.

ELSA

In a tense tone.

Philip? — It is Philip.

She runs swiftly away and does not look back as she runs.

SECOND GIRL

See Elsa run! Just see her run! Where is her

boasted Philip now? She has been blowing his trumpet all the year! And now she won't even speak to him.

FIRST GIRL

I — for my part — don't intend to speak to him either.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

O we must speak to him! We are Christians, but we can freeze him out all the same.

Philip appears in the distance. He no longer wears the uniform of a soldier. He carries a travelling bag. Behind him are several small street boys, shabbily dressed, with bare feet; they follow Philip, mimicking his every movement and making grotesque faces and gestures in derision. Philip, very pale, is quite conscious of the boys, but he does not turn his head or show them by any sign that he is aware of their presence. As Philip and his train of mockers come in sight of the dancers, the boys run away and Philip alone approaches them. He raises his hat in greeting. The First Girl turns her back. The others bow coldly.

MINNIE

Kindly.

Welcome home, Philip!

PHILIP

Thank you, Minnie.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Holding out her hand stiffly.

How do you do! What a little army you had following you! Why did your little men run away?

PHILIP

Taking her hand and flushing hotly.

My little men were not sufficiently well-dressed to enter this distinguished presence.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Elsa ran, too. She ran when she saw you coming. Did you see her?

PHILIP

With quiet dignity.

Yes — I saw her.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

I wonder why! Do you remember that day she read us about her hero?

PHILIP

Yes, I remember.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Well, she has been worse than ever about "valiant heroes," as she calls them, ever since the war began. She was crazy about you when you were made Lieutenant.

PHILIP

That was kind of her. Good morning — my Mother is expecting me.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Hurriedly, to get it in before he escapes.

Minnie was reading us a letter from Jack — we are all so proud of *him*.

PHILIP

Warmly.

You well may be! I really must hurry on — my Mother is waiting.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Your poor Mother!

Exit Philip.

MINNIE

Turning to the Rector's Daughter savagely.

I'm the Spitfire of the village — you are supposed

to be the Saint — but, upon my word, I wouldn't change places with you!

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

Surprised.

Wouldn't you really?

MINNIE

No — really.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER

In a self-satisfied tone.

I am sure I shook hands with him!

ACT III

SCENE III

ACT III

SCENE III

A FEW MINUTES LATER THAN THE LAST SCENE

A sparsely furnished room in Mr. Gordon's simple house.

Two long windows lead to a pleasant porch, which in summer-time becomes part of the room; one of the windows stands open for ventilation. On one side of the room, there is a door leading to the corridor, and on the other side is a large old-fashioned fireplace. Here a bright fire of balsam boughs crackles cheerfully, for though it is the end of May, the weather is uncertain.

Mr. Gordon sits by the fire reading a newspaper. Mr. Gordon is a sallow, dyspeptic-looking man with a mouth that shuts like a steel trap; he is nervous and irritable, but to his own mind and that of his wife, he is the just judge whose word is law. Mrs. Gordon, an anxious care-worn woman, is looking out of the closed window.

MRS. GORDON

Hesitatingly.

When Philip comes, Father, I hope you will be kind to him —

MR. GORDON

Sharply.

He ought to be beaten with many stripes for he knew better.

MRS. GORDON

O Father!

After a pause.

Don't you think it is most time for Philip to come,
Father?

*Mr. Gordon does not answer. After a pause, Mrs. Gordon
speaks again.*

Don't you think it is most time for Philip to come,
Father?

Mr. Gordon does not answer.

Father, what time is it?

MR. GORDON

With nervous irritation.

What is time?

MRS. GORDON

Patiently.

I don't know, Father, but what time is it?

MR. GORDON

*Who always treats his grey-haired wife as though she were a
child, looking at his watch.*

It is eleven o'clock; time for you to allow me to
finish my paper.

Mrs. Gordon is silenced; she continues her watch at the window. Mr. Gordon rattles his newspaper in an emphatic, almost aggressive way.

MRS. GORDON

Suddenly with as much excitement as she was ever known to show.

There he is — there he is — Father!

MR. GORDON

Sharply.

Who?

MRS. GORDON

With exaggerated patience.

Why — Philip — Father!

Philip's quick step is heard upon the porch and through the open window he comes, with eager haste, to find the shelter of home, after the trying ordeal of his walk across the Common.

PHILIP

Agitatedly.

Mother! Father!

MRS. GORDON

Kissing him.

How do you do, my boy?

Mr. Gordon rises, throws down his paper impatiently, and puts his hands behind his back.

MR. GORDON

In a tone of arraignment.

So you are home, Philip!

Philip holds out his hand to his father who does not take it.

PHILIP

Father! Won't you shake hands with me?

MR. GORDON

Irritably.

I don't shake hands with deserters.

PHILIP

Impulsively.

Father, take that back!

MRS. GORDON

In a strained tone of distress.

Don't anger your Father, Philip — he has had enough to bear.

PHILIP

Father, you will let me explain —

MR. GORDON

You explained it all at unnecessary length in your letter; as I wrote you, it was entirely unconvincing. We will now drop the subject. You will have to find something to do. I can't support you.

PHILIP

Flushing hotly.

Father!

MR. GORDON

You won't find it easy. Of course you know that Stickley and Stowett will have nothing to do with you, — nothing whatever. No, you will not find it an easy task to secure work. There isn't a decent House in the town that will take you; the feeling runs high, very high; you must be prepared for that. Even the boys sing ditties about you in the street — (*His voice breaks*) — about my son — about my son —

PHILIP

With feeling.

I am very sorry.

MR. GORDON

Sharply.

No, you are not, or you wouldn't have done it.

PHILIP

I mean I am sorry for your distress. I must do what I think is right.

MR. GORDON

In a tone like a whip-lash.

Right? Right? Do you think any decent-minded man who ever lived would think what you have done is right?

PHILIP

Yes, Father.

MR. GORDON

Who?

PHILIP

Jesus Christ — Confucius — Buddha — Socrates —

MR. GORDON

Interrupting angrily.

Don't quibble. It is impertinence!

PHILIP

I don't mean impertinence, Sir. Surely, with our boasted civilisation, some of us at least should remember the wisdom of the philosophers.

MR. GORDON

His anger rising.

Silence!

MRS. GORDON

In a flutter.

My Son, don't annoy your Father.

To Mr. Gordon.

Father, you'd better get ready — it is most time for the Rector to come. You know you promised to walk with him to the meeting. (*Greatly relieved*). There, I hear his step upon the porch, now.

The Rector, who is entirely at home in Mr. Gordon's household, enters informally through the open window.

MR. GORDON

How do you do, Rector?

MRS. GORDON

Good morning, Rector.

THE RECTOR

Good morning, Mrs. Gordon. Good morning, my dear Warden.

He catches sight of Philip, — his face changes — his voice freezes.

How do you do?

MR. GORDON

I'll get my hat.

Exit Mr. Gordon.

THE RECTOR

To Mrs. Gordon.

This is a very sad occasion.

PHILIP

Irritated.

Is it a funeral?

THE RECTOR

Pompously.

Yes, my Son, it is the burial of your Father's and Mother's hopes.

PHILIP

Perhaps it would be well for you to read the Service for Malefactors over me, Doctor.

MRS. GORDON

Horried.

Why, Philip!

THE RECTOR

Don't jest, young man. You have brought trouble enough to this house; the affair is very sad.

MR. GORDON

Calling from without.

Rector!

THE RECTOR

Good-bye, Mrs. Gordon. Philip, you may come to my study this afternoon — I will read you a sermon that I wrote upon the subject after I saw your letter to your Father. Come at three-thirty.

PHILIP

Thank you, but I have an engagement.

THE RECTOR

Then come when you can — I will be your friend.
“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel.”
Good-bye, Mrs. Gordon.

Exit the Rector.

PHILIP

Turning eagerly to his Mother.

Mother, has a letter come for me?

MRS. GORDON

No, my Son.

Laying a hand upon his arm.

Philip, I am glad your Grandfather did not live to see this day.

PHILIP

Distressed.

O Mother! You, too!

MRS. GORDON

I do not know what you mean, Philip! I have tried to be very kind.

PHILIP

Kind, yes — but —

MRS. GORDON

You surely can't expect me to be *proud* of you.

PHILIP

Mother, I want to talk to you.

MRS. GORDON

Now don't talk, Philip, you will only get us both upset.

PHILIP

But I must tell you my thought.

MRS. GORDON

In a sweet but obstinate voice.

You told it all in the letter, and it did not convince your Father.

PHILIP

But Father is not you.

MRS. GORDON

Conclusively.

What your Father and the Rector say cannot be wrong.

PHILIP

Impatiently.

Mother, how mediæval you are!

MRS. GORDON

With air of great forbearance.

Philip, please be respectful. I have borne a great deal for you.

PHILIP

Repenting of his impatience, taking her hand and kissing it reverently.

I did not mean to be disrespectful, Mother. Of course you are mediæval because you look like a

lovely old Florentine picture. But, dear Mother, won't you please think for yourself?

MRS. GORDON

Sweetly.

I do think for myself, my Son. I think what your Father thinks.

PHILIP

I should rather you would turn me out of the house than —

MRS. GORDON

Interrupting.

You know, Philip, I would not turn you out of the house for anything; not even if you had committed murder.

PHILIP

I have.

MRS. GORDON

Startled.

What, Philip?

PHILIP

Committed murder.

MRS. GORDON

Turning pale.

What *do* you mean?

PHILIP

I have killed men —

MRS. GORDON

In a tone of horror.

Philip!

PHILIP

In battle.

MRS. GORDON

Looking much relieved.

What a turn you gave me! I thought you meant you had actually murdered; I do not know what to expect from you these days.

PHILIP

I do mean just that. Killing is killing — is it not? Wherever it is done.

MRS. GORDON

Mercy, no; that's very different.

PHILIP

In what way is it different?

MRS. GORDON

O it's different — because — it's different.

PHILIP

I am convinced it is the very same; that is why I left the army; *intent* is the basis of crime. Many a man is called a murderer who did not really intend to kill, but every man I killed, I killed with deliberate aim and intent.

MRS. GORDON

How you talk!

PHILIP

It's a fact; a dying man showed it to me.

MRS. GORDON

Was he one of our soldiers?

PHILIP

No, he was an enemy.

MRS. GORDON

Sweetly.

And you shot him? Well, I must say I'm glad you killed one of the villains, anyway, before you came home! But there is no use practising arguments on me, now, Philip, as you used to when you were little, about "intent" and "basis of crime" and all that lawyer talk, you won't need it any longer. You will have to give up the law, no one will take you; even Mrs. Crimmins told Mary Jane that her husband won't have you — and he is only a cheap lawyer.

PHILIP

Bitterly.

I might break stone.

MRS. GORDON

You never could. You would be more apt to break your back.

PHILIP

Please let me finish what I started to say to you a moment ago, Mother! I should rather you turned me out of the house feeling I was right, than be kind to me feeling I was wrong.

MRS. GORDON

How can wrong be right?

PHILIP

A trifle impatiently.

Mother, have you not even a sense of humour?

MRS. GORDON

Reproachfully.

Philip, you don't mean to say you think this sad business is funny, do you?

PHILIP

Yes, I think it actually begins to be funny.

He throws back his head and laughs bitterly.

MRS. GORDON

Patting his arm.

There, there, now, my Boy, you are not yourself!
Your laugh hasn't the old merry ring.

PHILIP

Bitterly.

Hasn't it — really? How strange!

MRS. GORDON

In a coaxing tone as though he were an infant.

There! There! You are tired. I'll go to make some tea and toast for you; just the kind of toast you like, crisp and brown.

PHILIP

Listlessly.

Thank you, Mother! You are very kind.

Mrs. Gordon goes to the door. Philip runs after her and lays a detaining hand upon her arm.

Mother, are you *sure* there is no letter for me?

MRS. GORDON

I have told you there is no letter. Who would write to you *now*?

PHILIP

I was expecting an answer to a letter I wrote some time ago.

MRS. GORDON

You must not expect answers after what you have done.

With the sudden intuition of the Mother.

You expected it from one of the girls! — that

Elsa-girl, perhaps — don't you know they are all down on you, now, every one of them?

PHILIP

Poignantly.

I presume they are.

MRS. GORDON

'You ought to hear them talk, Mary Jane says.

Catching the look in his eyes, Mrs. Gordon is sorry for him; she pats his hand.

There, now, my Boy, don't worry; of course you will never be able to hold up your head in this town again. We are disgraced, as your Father says, but don't worry, my Boy, don't worry!

PHILIP

Bitterly.

O no, I will not worry.

Exit Mrs. Gordon. Philip laughs a mocking laugh.

If I were a woman I should cry; but a man's laughter is salter than a woman's tears.

His laughter ceases — he is silent for a moment.

My God! It is worse even than I thought it could be — much worse —

He leans his head upon his hands.

I cannot bear it — I cannot bear it.

A light step is heard in the corridor. Philip raises his head, the pupils of his eyes and his nostrils dilate.

ELSA

From the corridor.

May I come in? Your Mother said I might.

Elsa enters radiant and joyous.

PHILIP

Amazement and delight mingling in his voice.

Elsa!

ELSA

I could not meet you before all those girls — I simply could not. (*Exultingly.*) I ran away, and came here — I wanted to see you alone to tell you I have found my Hero, Philip, at last — I have found my Hero!

PHILIP

Making a mighty effort to control his emotion.

I — I hope you will be happy.

ELSA

In a ringing tone.

Ah, yes, I shall be happy — very happy!

PHILIP

Stiffly.

I congratulate you.

ELSA

Coming closer.

Philip, don't you love me any more?

PHILIP

Love you! — O my God!

ELSA

Fascinatingly.

But I do not think you are very polite; here I come — without waiting for an invitation — the first to do homage to my Hero — and he is as cold as Alpine snow.

PHILIP

In a bewildered, dazed way.

Your Hero? — *I?*

ELSA

Certainly! — You! A Hero is one who does the hardest thing and you have done the hardest thing, Philip — the very hardest!

PHILIP

Taking her in his arms.

Elsa.

There is a long silence.

PHILIP

Brokenly.

I am not worthy.

ELSA

Decidedly.

You are worthy of all things — You are a Hero.

PHILIP

*Tenderly.*Ah! No — I am only a struggling man, who sees
a coming light that all the world will some day see.

ELSA

*A look as of a white flame comes into her eyes; her manner is
that of a prophetess.*All the world will some day see — and that day is
not far off!

PHILIP

Greatly surprised.

You believe that?

ELSA

I *know* it! I have changed — thank God — I have changed!

Philip, my Love, I have something very wonderful to tell you!

With sweet dignity she takes his hand and leads him to a settle; she takes off her hat and throws it from her; then she kneels upon the floor before him and clasps both hands upon his knee.

That night you were on the battle-field, keeping your vigil beside the dead, I, too, kept a vigil. It was the same night — I compared the dates when I received your letter — your beautiful letter! I cannot explain what happened — I cannot understand it — but I *dare* not deny it! If we receive wireless messages from across the sea, why may we not receive a wireless message from the stars? Why may we not receive it from *beyond* the stars? I will tell you the facts *exactly* as they happened. I went to sleep that night thinking of you; Minnie had had a letter from Jack that afternoon; and she told me what fine things he said of you, of your bravery and of your promotion to Lieutenant; — you know Jack's amusing way of putting things — I laughed in the darkness — and then I fell asleep.

Suddenly I was awakened by a call — I thought it was your voice, calling Elsa, Elsa. I was frightened — O so frightened — I jumped up and ran to the window — it was dark; there were clouds in the sky — I knelt at the window, looking out into the night; and then, again I heard the voice — and I knew it was not yours: it was deep and terrible; it sounded like a bell tolling across measureless waters — but every word was clear, distinct. “Woe, woe,” cried the voice; “woe unto those who break the bonds of Brotherhood; woe unto those who lay waste the pleasant places of the earth; woe unto those who fan the powers of enmity and hate; woe unto those who have called false things true, cruel things brave, and barbarous things of good report.” Philip, I was so frightened!

PHILIP

Tenderly laying his hand upon her head.

Dear Heart.

ELSA

Then, all was still. And as I knelt there, it was just as you said in your letter — It was as though a window opened in my mind; — I seemed to see rivers of blood, hideous masses of horror, to hear

the piteous cries of women and children and the moans and curses of those who died in the lust of battle. I remembered how I had thought only of the gorgeous surface show that covered the ghastly reality; at last, I saw the truth. I knew — I understood — and I was ashamed. I shuddered as I knelt there — I thought I could not bear it.

Her voice breaks — she is quiet for a moment — Philip holds the pregnant silence; he does not intrude upon it with a word or with a touch.

Suddenly, the clouds lifted, the morning star rose clear and beautiful, the dawn broke, and the rosy light came over the hills.

Then, another voice — melodious, musical — spoke these words —

“Fear not! Behold, a new order is dawning upon the earth. Wars shall cease. Peace shall knit the world together in a bond of common Brotherhood.”

PHILIP

With deep emotion.

My Beloved!

ELSA

I have told no one, for they would not understand — perhaps they would not believe — but I longed

to tell you — I began a letter — I began twenty — but I could not write — it was too sacred. As I was wondering how I could write it, I received your letter. When I read that — O Philip! — Then I knew the message had been sent to prepare me to be your mate! The new order *is* dawning upon the earth — and you are in the vanguard!

PHILIP

We are together!

He kisses her with exaltation.

ELSA

Radiantly.

And now, together, side by side, we will watch for the Morning.

A shadow comes over Philip's face. Elsa, seeing it, draws nearer to him.

ELSA

What is it, Philip?

PHILIP

Dejectedly.

Elsa, we must wait.

ELSA

Wait! For what?

PHILIP

Until I may claim you.

ELSA

Enchantingly.

Here I am, Philip.

PHILIP

Taking her hand.

I must be able to take care of you — I must find something to do. I am penniless.

ELSA

What do I care for money?

PHILIP

Nothing — therefore I must care for it for you. I must find employment. No one will have me, here; I must go away. I may have to break stone or split wood.

ELSA

Putting her arms about him.

Where you go, I will go, your stone shall be my stone, and your wood shall be my wood. I will —

There is a knock at the door; they start, rise and move apart.

Enter Mr. Greart.

MR. GREART

Cordially.

Your Mother told me to come in. I never had the honour of being in this house before.

PHILIP

Going towards him welcomingly.

The honour is ours, Sir.

MR. GREART

Grasping Philip's hand.

Welcome home!

Turning to Elsa.

You got the start of me, my fair Atlanta; I had hoped to be the first to welcome home this young soldier; he used to be one of my boys, you know.

PHILIP

Greatly embarrassed.

Mr. Greart. I am not a soldier any longer — I —
I —

MR. GREART

Oh! I know all about that — I saw your letter

to Stickley. You don't think I mean *that* kind of a soldier, do you? I mean a Soldier of the Durable.

Seeing the questioning look in Philip's eyes and the response in Elsa's.

Can't stop, now, to explain what I mean by a Soldier of the Durable — Elsa understands. I have a matter of business I wish to settle, at once, without delay.

ELSA

Taking up her hat.

Good-bye.

MR. GREART

No, stay, Elsa — it isn't private. It is only that I wish this young man to take charge of my legal affairs. Will you, Sir?

PHILIP

In a tone of amazement.

Mr. Greart —

MR. GREART

I hope you will do me that favour. You can name your own price — anything — anything you please — if you will only get me out of the clutches of Stickley and Stowett. I am sick to death of their

dreary demurrers, their tiresome red tape, their everlasting quibbles, and their fussy fidgets. I want a man with logic and despatch; one who treats the Law like a live thing, to clear the way, not block it.

PHILIP

Abashed.

Mr. Greart — if I could —

MR. GREART

Oh! You can all right. As I said, I saw your long letter to Stickley, setting forth the reasons why you left the army. By Gad, it was logical! Logical and concise — not a word too much; no, nor a word too little. *You* are the man I want.

PHILIP

Thank you, Sir.

MR. GREART

I won't stand in your way; later you can take a wider sweep. In fact, my friend Vandever, in the city, tells me he will be looking for a new partner next year.

PHILIP

In a tone of amazement.

Vandever!

MR. GREART

Yes, that *is* a berth! Isn't it? You will be all right with him. So will he with you. I advised him for his own good. But I wish you, first. May I count on you?

PHILIP

With dignity and modesty.

I will do all I can, Sir: I am very grateful.

ELSA

Taking Mr. Greart's hand.

You dear!

MR. GREART

There, there, Elsa.

ELSA

Bewitchingly.

You will have to take me, too — because — I —
we —

MR. GREART

Ah! Atlanta, I am not as dull as I look. I took that into account; but, let me tell you, if I wasn't an old greyhead I shouldn't take you by proxy. That young man would have to look out for himself.

ELSA

Bending and kissing Mr. Greart's hand.

There is a little piece of me that will always belong to you — just only to you — always, always.

Mr. Greart lays his hand on Elsa's head.

ELSA

Mr. Greart, I was wrong — You are right: War is wicked.

MR. GREART

I had no fear for you. I knew you would change your point of view the moment you allowed your logical mind to *think!* That, you had never really done. You took the symbol for the substance, the livery for the life!

Through the open window the boys are heard, singing as they pass.

THE BOYS

Singing.

Get your gun, get your gun,
And shoot them every one.
Let them fly, let them die,
Let them perish as they run.
Get your gun, get your gun,
O go and get your gun!

MR. GREART

Indignantly.

That is the way our boys' morals are stunted and blunted. It is abominable! Unspeakable! War is Hell. Even our generals admit that — but they think that when war is over, the Hell is ended. They forget that the miasma of Hell spreads over the country and taints the little children, affecting them for life. How long, O Lord — how long will it take men to see that two and two make four?

PHILIP

Perhaps they must wait until they have a Vision, as I had.

ELSA

Or until they hear a Voice of Prophecy, as I did.

MR. GREART

Not at all. All they have to do is to think to the root of the matter. I am not given to the modern superstition. I never had a revelation in my life nor heard a voice that wasn't human; and as for prophecy! Each man is the prophet of his own Destiny. No, it is a simple question of logic, of public economy, of common sense, of mathematics, of two and two making four.

PHILIP

I see that, also, now.

MR. GREART

Moreover, War is evil because it breaks the Supreme Law of the Universe, —

PHILIP

Questioningly.

The Supreme Law of the Universe?

MR. GREART

The Law of Harmony — that is the Supreme Law. To break the Law of Harmony is the unpardonable sin.

ELSA

Looking archly up at Mr. Greart.

And Love? —

MR. GREART

With memory in his eyes.

Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

